

# Pathways to Parity Workforce Strategy 2023–2026

## Accelerating the path to gender equity through inclusive, supportive and flexible workplace cultures.

The Pathways to Parity Workforce Strategy 2023–2026 sets out clear and measurable actions on how the department will continue to work towards workplace gender equity and inclusive workplaces for staff of all genders. This requires cultural change to remove the barriers to equitable participation in the workforce.

### Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands from across Queensland and pays respect to the Elders – past and present – for they hold the memories, traditions and culture of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

### Message from the Director-General

An inclusive workplace culture allows us to perform better, attract and retain the workforce we need, and deliver services that support our strategic goal of realising the potential of every student. Pathways to Parity focuses on improving gender equity as part of the department’s workplace inclusion and diversity framework – [We all belong](#). While we have made progress, we know further action is required to achieve greater workplace gender equity and to reduce the gender pay gap. By evaluating the implementation of the Pathways to Parity Workforce Strategy 2019–2021, and receiving feedback from our staff, we have identified areas of opportunity where we can continue to progress equity, diversity, respect, and inclusion.

These opportunities include: removing barriers to career progression; building capability to create inclusive and supportive workplace cultures; providing education on workplace gender equity; and monitoring improvement through analysis of data.

Our second Pathways to Parity Workforce Strategy sets out the next phase as we continue to transform workplaces and drive gender equity. Gender equity benefits everyone and it is important for our department to role model inclusive workplaces for all genders to our students and staff.

**Michael De’Ath**  
Director-General, Department of Education

### Pathways to Parity 2023–2026 aligns strategically with:



### Accomplishments

The Pathways to Parity Workforce Strategy 2023–2026 is a commitment to continuing progress on gender equity and builds on the actions of the previous workforce strategy (2019–2021).

Achievements of the Pathways to Parity Workforce Strategy 2019–2021 include:

- certification as a Family Friendly Workplace through external benchmarking against National Work and Family Standards
- completion of gender audit 2021–2022 for the department and transparency of the department’s gender pay gap in 2022
- development and delivery of the Pathways to Parity awareness session to build understanding of gender equity, and how to create inclusive workplaces for all genders
- launch of the Flexible by Design framework in December 2020 with supporting resources
- sharing of case studies and real examples showing different possibilities for flexible work arrangements
- new flexible work questions added to the School Opinion Survey in 2019
- inclusive communication guide published and promoted with gender-specific examples
- delivery of a ‘Leading inclusion at work’ pilot session in Townsville, Toowoomba and Brisbane
- launch of the Parents and Carers online community for staff, including webinars available for working parents and carers (through our employer membership with Parents at Work)
- piloted the financial wellbeing program to rural, regional and remote teachers in 2019
- delivered the 12-month job sharing platform pilot and cultural change campaign in 2020–2021.

### Gender at the Department of Education

While the statistics below refer to men and women, the department acknowledges that gender identity exists on a continuum and is not static or confined to a binary. The department is proud to have a workforce that includes non-binary and gender diverse people, and is committed to supporting employees to affirm their gender in the workplace.

#### Gender trends

Men are more likely to be employed at higher classifications, while women are more likely to be employed at lower classifications:

- Women make up 79% of the workforce, and are underrepresented in Senior Officer equivalent (SO) and Senior Executive Service (SES) equivalent classification and above
- Men represent less than a quarter of the teacher workforce, but make up over 40% of all Principals
- 76% of teachers are women
- 90% of teacher aides are women
- 78% of technicians and trade workers are men.

#### Diversity groups

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are exiting the department at a rate 1.4 times higher than women overall; and increases to 4.9 times higher at SO equivalent level
- Women living with disability are significantly overrepresented at AO1 level – making up 22% of all AO1 equivalent employees.
- Women born overseas experience the highest gender pay gap at 10.8%, almost double the overall gender pay gap.

#### Flexible work

90% of part-time staff are women and part-time arrangements at SO equivalent classifications and above are less than 2 percent.

#### Carer’s leave

At AO8 and SO equivalent classifications, men take more carer’s leave than women, while women at SES equivalent and above take the highest amount of carer’s leave.

#### Parental leave

Over 98% of parental leave was taken by women, and 1% of parental leave taken occurred at SO and SES equivalent classifications and above.

#### Progress

- The department’s gender pay gap is improving over time, dropping from 6.64% in 2020, to 6.02% in 2022.
- 72.73% of all new recruits at the SO equivalent classification are women.
- Men are more likely to successfully convert from temporary to permanent employment as a teacher aide – with a successful conversion rate of 73.08% (compared to 60% for women).

Source: Gender audit report 2022. Data sources: Minimum obligatory human resource information (MOHRI); MyHR leave data.

# Pathways to Parity Action Plan 2023–2026

## Flexible work and support

- Leaders understand the benefits of flexible work arrangements and lead by example in their roles to develop a culture of flexibility within their teams.
- Leaders actively support employees of all genders, career stages, locations and caring responsibilities to explore mutually successful flexible working arrangements to meet individual, business, role and team needs.
- Leaders support employees to fulfil their work, family and carer commitments; and are inclusive of the diverse forms these take, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relationships and kinship responsibilities, LGBTQ+ families, and foster care.

## Inclusion and career opportunity

- All employees are able to pursue career progression opportunities, regardless of gender.
- Leaders have an understanding of gender equity and take action through inclusive leadership to break the connection between unconscious bias and hiring decisions.
- All employees benefit from gender equity and each have a role to play in creating fair and inclusive workplaces.
- Improved flexibility at leadership levels enhance gender balance and improves access to career progression opportunities.

## Collaborative inquiry and accountability

- The department values diverse perspectives and actively engages staff with relevant lived experience to co-design gender equity deliverables.
- Co-design, engagement and consultation approaches are developed mindfully in regards to accessibility, cultural safety and psychological safety.
- Staff have visibility of department gender audits.
- Initiatives are developed and implemented to reflect staff feedback via Working for Queensland and School Opinion Surveys.
- The department has accountability for workplace gender equity measures and actions, published externally.

## Actions 2023–2026

- Build on flexible work initiatives to reflect contemporary circumstances, such as building leader capability and promoting resources to support successful implementation of flexible work.
- Share real examples and success stories of flexible work arrangements in action across hierarchy, job type, gender and location, that challenge traditional gender roles, including men and LGBTQ+ families.
- Enhance awareness and understanding of flexible work arrangements for leaders and employees by improving content in Management Foundations, Mandatory All-Staff Training, and OneInduction materials.
- Enhance resources for transitioning to parental leave, keeping in touch and returning to work.
- Develop people leader toolkit to support family friendly workplace frameworks, policies, procedures and practices.
- Proudly share our status as a certified Family Inclusive Workplace to amplify our employer brand and attract high-calibre candidates of all genders.
- Promote flexibility for leadership positions.
- Celebrate days of significance, such as International Women’s Day and International Men’s Day, as an opportunity to build capability and understanding of gender equity through promoting Pathways to Parity education resources.
- Embed inclusive and equitable features into systems, processes and practices for attracting, recruiting and promoting people of all genders; and in particular culturally and linguistically diverse women, Aboriginal women and Torres Strait Islander women, and women with disability.
- Develop a real-time diversity data tool for use by hiring managers at their location when making recruitment decisions.
- Enhance unconscious bias learning resources in the We All Belong learning suite to improve understanding of how unconscious bias affects the recruitment process.
- Research employee experience insights through co-design forums to understand gendered barriers to career and employment pathways, and develop initiatives to address these.
- Undertake a gender equity audit process on an annual basis and report findings to the Office of the Special Commissioner, Equity and Diversity.
- Continue to explore the contributing factors to the gender pay gap, and develop tailored solutions to address it.
- Analyse annual workforce engagement data using Working for Queensland survey and School Opinion Survey data to inform initiatives.
- Review terminology used to collect gender data and revise if needed.
- Co-design deliverables in the department’s Family Inclusive Workplace Action Plan to support parents and carers in the workplace.
- Provide bi-annual updates to the executive champions who report on Pathways to Parity Workforce Strategy progress to the Executive Leadership Team.

## We all have a role to play

### Executive champions

The Pathways to Parity executive champions provide governance and executive support to advance gender equity at all levels of the department.

### Leaders

Leaders champion gender equity through inclusive leadership, promoting flexible work arrangements, and challenging gender bias. They engage with resources, tools and development opportunities to support them in doing so.

### All staff

All staff treat each other with respect, and create an inclusive work environment where employees of all genders thrive. Staff are supported to work flexibly and explore career progression opportunities.

## Legal and policy context

This workforce strategy is underpinned by a policy and legal framework that supports inclusive and diverse workplaces. These include:

- the Commonwealth *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of gender identity
- Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019*, which protects rights of a person to be treated fairly and to not be discriminated against
- the department’s Diversity and inclusion policy, which encourages the establishment and maintenance of respectful workplace cultures
- the Queensland *Public Sector Act 2022*, which enshrines a positive duty for agency chief executives to progress equity, diversity, respect and inclusion.

